News from Cam Gordon Council Member, Second Ward February 2012

http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/ward2

Redistricting. The Redistricting Group of the Charter Commission is currently drafting new Ward maps for the City of Minneapolis. Public hearings on the first draft maps will be held February 29 from 5-7pm at Webber Community Center, 4400 Dupont Ave N and March 1 from 5-7pm at Hosmer Library, 347 E 36th St. See http://www.minneapolismn.gov/redistricting2012 for more information. Various maps have been drafted both by the Commission and outside groups. The most recent map from the Commission (dated February 15), agrees in principle with a map put forward by the one developed by the "Committee for a Fair Redistricting," a group of primarily East African stakeholders. Both maps would create a minority opportunity ward, a proposed Ward 6 or a significantly altered Ward 2, which would have an African American population of around 40%, a Hispanic population of around 20%, a Native American population of between 4% and 7% and a White population of 33%. The Seward Neighborhood Group has taken a formal position in favor of the Redistricting Group's map, and against any map that would split the neighborhood into two or more wards. The West Bank Community Coalition has taken a position in favor of creating a minority opportunity ward, but has not supported any particular map.

Urban Agriculture Ordinance Amendments. The zoning code text amendments driven by the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan will be coming to the Council's Zoning and Planning committee on March 1. Because that agenda also features fights about two controversial developments, and because some Council Members have signaled that they may attempt to make substantive amendments to weaken the Urban Ag Text Amendments, I expect the vote to be continued one cycle, until the next Zoning and Planning meeting on March **22**nd. I support the staff recommendation, and will fight for the strongest possible changes to the zoning ordinance, in keeping with the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan that the Council unanimously passed last year.

Composting Ordinance. The composting ordinance I authored has passed the Council's Regulatory Energy and Environment committee unanimously with one abstention. I am hopeful that these amendments will pass the full Council on March 8th. The text of the ordinance, as well as a description, sample site plans and staff's power point presentation, are here: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/ree/WCMS1P-087704 (item number 9).

CLIC Appointee Needed. Seward resident Becca Vargo-Daggett, who was one of my appointees to the Capital Long Range Improvement Committee, has moved out of Minneapolis. I need a new CLIC appointee, and I am looking for someone from the west side of the river — Seward, the West Bank, or Cooper. CLIC makes recommendations to the City Council and Mayor on capital improvement program development and annual capital improvement budgets, and has tremendous influence on the infrastructure investments the City makes. If you are interested, please contact my office, or apply here: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/WCMS1P-084544.

Sabo Bridge. As I'm sure you've heard, the Martin Olav Sabo bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Highway 55 suffered a critical failure of two of its support cables on Sunday, February 18th. This disrupted traffic on Highway 55 and operations on the Hiawatha LRT for a little more than a week. Public Works staff have responded quickly and professionally to this unexpected problem, shoring up the bridge and getting traffic and LRT service reopened as soon as possible. Problems with other cables and their connections to the bridge have been discovered, and the City has hired a contractor to investigate what caused these critical failures. These cables are a little over five years old, and were inspected just last year and found to be in good condition. The bridge itself is closed to bicycle and pedestrian traffic indefinitely. I support this important and highly visible investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and I'm confident that we will be able to isolate the cause of these failures and make the repairs necessary to reopen it. I am confident that the costs of the repairs will be covered by whichever party is found

by the investigation currently underway to have caused the problems with these cables. For more information, see the Public Works report here:

http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-088139.pdf.

New Director of Employment Equity. The Civil Rights Department has hired **Karen Francois** as Director of Employment Equity for the City of Minneapolis. She will join the One Minneapolis Equity in Employment project team in the ongoing efforts of the city to mitigate the racial disparity in employment. The One Minneapolis equity in employment program was one of the only new programs Mayor Rybak and the city council funded in 2012 with an initial investment of \$300,000. A key focus of the initiative will be on providing hard-to-employ workers with training and placement for good jobs in the green economy. I have been leading the Council's efforts on employment equity for years, and I'm excited to welcome Ms. Francois to the City. We certainly have quite a lot of room for improvement.

MPD to Hire Back Laid-Off CSOs. The Council has authorized the Police Department to use \$400,000 in one-time funds from their 2011 budget overage to recall the group of Community Service Officers who were previously laid off. This is good for MPD's overall diversity, as this CSO class was more diverse than the MPD as a whole.

Tenants Rights Meeting on the West Bank. In light of the concerns I heard at the most recent meeting about the Riverside Plaza renovation project, my office has scheduled a public meeting for West Bank residents regarding tenants' rights on **Tuesday**, **March 27** at 7pm at the Brian Coyle Center. City staff and legal experts will be there to help people understand their rights as tenants and what they can do if they have concerns about their housing, maintenance, management or landlords.

Cedar Avenue Sidewalks. The Council has voted to allocate \$300,000 in Transit Oriented Development funds towards fixing the sidewalks on Cedar Avenue. These City funds match an existing \$300,000 grant from Hennepin County and a \$150,000 commitment from the Central Corridor project, for a total of \$750,000 to be spent on improving the Cedar Avenue streetscape. Planning and Public Works staff will lead a community input process on the specific improvements to be made. I want to thank Joe Bernard in Planning for his work to find a source for these City dollars. The streetscape on Cedar has been in disrepair for far too long, and I look forward to seeing it dramatically improved.

New Solar Array on Fire Station No. 19 In February new solar installation was put on Station 19 to provide electricity and hot water to the building. The station is one of six Minneapolis buildings that have new solar installations funded by a grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the Minnesota Department of Commerce, and using Xcel Energy rebates. The roof of Fire Station No. 19 features 58 new solar electric panels, which will provide 9.83 kilowatts of power, and three solar thermal panels, which will provide the fire station with 50 to 70 percent of its hot water needs.

Sewer Work on West River Parkway. This month the Metropolitan Council is beginning work on a segment of its sanitary sewer that runs along West River Parkway in Cedar Riverside on the bluffs below the University Medical Center Riverside campus near 4th St. Work includes digging access tunnels and repairing damaged pipes. It is expected to be completed by the end of June. For more information contact Met Council staff: Seng Thongvanh at 651-602-4538. seng.thongvanh@metc.state.mn.us.

Central Corridor Construction. Construction has begun on the private utilities on and under University Avenue in preparation for Central Corridor construction this year. My office heard multiple complaints from residents about the poor quality of the pedestrian accommodations made during construction, and took an active role in communicating these concerns to the Central Corridor Project Office and the private utilities. It sounds like there has been some

improvement on the avenue since that time. If you have concerns about the construction impacts on University, please do not hesitate to let my office know. You can also find out more about construction and sign up for construction updates here:

http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/centralcorridor.asp.

Riverside Reconstruction. Final approvals are moving forward for the second phase of the Riverside Avenue reconstruction project. The Council has designated the location and improvements proposed to be made (Cedar Ave S to 23rd Ave S); received the cost estimates of \$5,850,000 for the road reconstruction and \$272,800 for the lighting; authorized the acquisition of permanent easements for sidewalk and ramp expansions; and directed the City Engineer to prepare proposed special assessments against the list of benefited properties. For more see: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-084582.pdf

Temporary Signal at University and 29th. The Council's Transportation and Public Works committee has authorized funding for a temporary signal at 29th and University. The City will devote \$25,000, or 25% of the total project cost. Hennepin County will fund another 25%, and the Met Council will provide the rest. I hope and expect that this will pass the Council on March 8th, and work can start on this signal soon. This signal will be up during construction this year, and be replaced by a permanent signal once construction is complete.

I-94 Sound Wall. I attended a meeting with residents who are concerned about the increase in freeway noise related to the new sound wall on I-94, and I continue to work with residents and Prospect Park's state representative and senator on this issue. It sounds like there are tentative plans for a neighborhood meeting with MnDOT in early April.

Funds for Boeser Site. The Council has applied for grants from the 2012 Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Demonstration Account TOD Grants and Tax Base Revitalization Account Contamination Cleanup TOD Grants for the Boeser Site. The request to the Met Council is for \$720,306, and the project is ranked third. The Prospect Park 2020 Plan deserves much of the credit for this result, and it's great to see this community-led planning have an impact on the City's development decisions.

Department Head Reappointments. The Mayor has renominated Velma Korbel as Director of Civil Rights, Steve Kotke as Public Works Director, and Gretchen Musicant as Commissioner of Health/Department of Health & Family Support. Velma and Gretchen were moved forward by the Public Safety Civil Rights and Health committee with my strong support. I expect the Council to support these reappointments.

CRA Bill. The Minnesota Legislature is considering a bill that would dramatically weaken the Minneapolis Civilian Review Authority by preventing it from making findings of fact (as authorized by the Minneapolis CRA ordinance). As someone who has fought to **strengthen** the CRA, I strongly oppose this terrible idea. It's interesting to note that it is not supported by **any** members of the Minneapolis legislative delegation. I find it very disappointing that some DFL members of the legislature have signed on as supporters of this awful bill.

State Rulemaking Bill. The Republicans in the state legislature have introduced another ill-conceived bill that would impose an unnecessary and destructive moratorium on rulemaking by state agencies. Among other things, this would stop work on the Pollution Control Agency's amendments to their composting rules which would, ironically, **significantly loosen** the existing regulations on composting businesses both large and small. That's the kind of unintended consequence that results from this sort of broad-brush anti-government extremism.

Funds for Seward Commons. The Council's Community Development committee has accepted three separate grants from external sources for the Seward Commons redevelopment: \$200,000 from the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, \$140,600 from the

Metropolitan Tax Base Revitalization Account, and \$135,000 from the Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund.

Funds for Riverside Plaza. The Council's Community Development committee has accepted a grant of \$300,000 from the Metropolitan Tax Base Revitalization Account for the Riverside Plaza renovation project.

Change to South Seward Urban Renewal Plan. The Council's Community Development committee has voted to modify the South Seward Urban Renewal Plan to facilitate the sale of excess land from the construction of the Hiawatha LRT Corridor to Z & K Development Company, for development of a bus parking area and storm water infiltration pond adjacent to the Jefferson Lines parking lot.

CRA Appointments. The Council's Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health committee has forwarded a slate of appointments to the Civilian Review Authority: Vernon Wetternach, Robert Briscoe, John Oskar Cetta, Jr, Nicholas Paul Cichowicz, Alvaro "Al" Giraud, Ian Pannkuk and Lorna Pettis. I especially want to thank Second Ward resident **Nimo Farah** for her willingness to serve. I was on the review panel for these appointments, and believe that they will do a great job leading our civilian review efforts. I am especially happy to see some great diversity on the panel, with African Americans, East African immigrants, and Latinos represented, in addition to people who have experience in law enforcement.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Committee, Capital Long Range Improvement Commission, Family Housing Fund (McKnight), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Neighborhood Community and Engagement Committee, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee and Workforce Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.

Ward Office Hours. Every Tuesday morning I hold "Office Hours" in the Ward from 9:30-

- 11:00am. Please feel free to call for an appointment or just stop by.
- 1st Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);
- 2nd Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);
- 3rd Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);
- 4th Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

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